



# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **SCHOOL MEAL ACCESS EXPANDED FOR CHILDREN IN NEED**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Kentucky, Illinois and Tennessee will participate in the initial year of an innovative universal free meal service option that makes it easier for low-income children to receive meals in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

The "Community Eligibility Option" will allow schools in high-poverty areas to eliminate the use of applications and provide free breakfast and lunch to all students for the next four years.

"Community eligibility is a great way for schools to cut through burdensome red tape for themselves and low-income families so that children in high-poverty areas have access to the nutrition they need to learn and thrive," said Agriculture Under Secretary Kevin Concannon. "Schools will benefit from reduced paperwork, parents will not have to fill out duplicative forms, and children in need will get better access to healthy school meals."

Under this option, schools utilize preexisting data to determine the amount of reimbursement they can claim from USDA. The determination is primarily based on the percentage of households in that community who are already participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. Schools that utilize this option agree to provide meals to all children free of charge, and USDA reimburses them for the appropriate amount based on this preexisting data. Under this option, schools will still be responsible for paying the remaining difference between the federal reimbursement amount and the total cost to operate the program.

School districts containing eligible schools must notify the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE's) Division of School and Community Nutrition of their intent to participate in the 2011-12 school year by July 29.

(more)

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In Kentucky, districts with one or more schools that have 40 percent or more of students eligible for free meals through direct certification in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, and the Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (K-TAP) qualify for participation in the program. Of the state's 174 school districts, 106 qualify.

Ashland Ind.	Cumberland Co.	Hart Co.	Martin Co.	Paris Ind.
Ballard Co.	Danville Ind.	Hazard Ind.	Mayfield Ind.	Pendleton Co.
Bath Co.	Edmonson Co.	Henderson Co.	McCracken Co.	Perry Co.
Bell Co.	Elliott Co.	Hopkins Co.	McCreary Co.	Pike Co.
Bellevue Ind.	Erlanger-Elsmere	Jackson Co.	McLean Co.	Powell Co.
Bourbon Co.	Ind.	Jefferson Co.	Meade Co.	Pulaski Co.
Bowling Green Ind.	Estill Co.	Jenkins Ind.	Menifee Co.	Rockcastle Co.
Breathitt Co.	Fayette Co.	Johnson Co.	Mercer Co.	Rowan Co.
Breckinridge Co.	Fleming Co.	Kenton Co.	Middlesboro Ind.	Russell Co.
Bullitt Co.	Floyd Co.	Knott Co.	Monroe Co.	Russellville Ind.
Caldwell Co.	Frankfort Ind.	Knox Co.	Montgomery Co.	Shelby Co.
Calloway Co.	Fulton Co.	LaRue Co.	Monticello Ind.	Trigg Co.
Campbell Co.	Fulton Ind.	Laurel Co.	Morgan Co.	Union Co.
Campbellsville Ind.	Garrard Co.	Lawrence Co.	Muhlenberg Co.	Warren Co.
Carroll Co.	Glasgow Ind.	Lee Co.	Murray Ind.	Wayne Co.
Carter Co.	Grant Co.	Leslie Co.	Nelson Co.	Webster Co.
Christian Co.	Graves Co.	Letcher Co.	Newport Ind.	Whitley Co.
Clark Co.	Grayson Co.	Lewis Co.	Nicholas Co.	Wolfe Co.
Clay Co.	Greenup Co.	Lincoln Co.	Ohio Co.	Woodford Co.
Clinton Co.	Hardin Co.	Madison Co.	Owensboro Ind.	
Covington Ind.	Harlan Co.	Magoffin Co.	Owsley Co.	
Crittenden Co.	Harrison Co.	Marion Co.	Paducah Ind.	

The Community Eligibility Option is among the early reforms enacted as a result of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, signed by President Barack Obama on December 13, 2010. The act requires the Community Eligibility Option to be phased in over three years and authorizes USDA to select up to three states to participate in the option in the 2011-12 school year. The option will be offered to additional states in successive years and will be available to all states beginning in the 2014-15 school year.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) oversees the administration of 15 nutrition assistance programs, including National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, that touch the lives of one in four Americans over the course of a year. These programs work in concert to form a national safety net against hunger. Visit [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov) for information about FNS and nutrition assistance programs.

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